The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. VII. BOSTON, JUNE, 1898. No. 1

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 1.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL 1
THE GRACE OF GOD 1
THE STILL HOUR 3
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 4
MR. LAMMERKIN'S ENDEAVORS 7
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL 9
AMUSEMENT COLUMN 9
LIFE AN EDUCATION 10
THE SIN OF OMISSION 11
IMPORTANT NOTICES 12

FROM "THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL."

Now is the high tide of the year.
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it.
We are happy now because God wills it:
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade, and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing:
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And, if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And, hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now.
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

THE GRACE OF GOD.

Part of the goodness there is in this world comes naturally. It is in the organization of soul and body. The sense of right and wrong, the delicacy of conscience, the feeling of moral obligation which is in us, we did not make ourselves. God gives this to us: he gives it new all the time. It is a light from him, shining into our hearts. It is his Holy Spirit dwelling in us, warning, advising, restraining, impelling us, It is in every human soul. His sun shines on the evil and on the good. This holy monitor, this careful inspector, this sacred. solemn voice, is from grace, from love. It is the Father's arm held round every child to keep him safe from evil.

Some have more of this, some less. Some persons seem to have a great instinct of conscience, a good genius for virtue. But they do not deserve the credit of it. They do not make themselves so: God makes them so. Others have less. That is no fault of theirs. So in an army, on a field-day, some stand nearer to the commander, and hear his voice more plainly; and others far off, where they have to listen sharply to hear the command. It is not a merit to be placed near nor a fault to be placed far away; but it is a fault if we do not try hard to hear the command, a fault if we do not listen.

So the grace of God puts into our organization sympathy, good nature, kindliness, giving more to some, and less to others, but giving to all their share. Some are, by their very nature, sweet and gentle, kind and self-forgetting, and ready to sympathize. They cannot help being sweet and sunny. It is like a perpetual Sunday when they are near us. But that is no merit of theirs: it is a gift of God.

And so some persons have, by nature, a certain sagacity, and a justness of perception, which keep them from going wrong. Good sense is an important element in good behavior. And some persons are full of hope, and see the great things which may be done, and so inspire others to labor, and labor themselves, in the light of a noble expectation. But that is of grace. God made them so: they did not make themselves so.

We have no right to blame people for not being born with all these delicate and charming qualities. Thank God for those who have them, and be willing to rejoice in their light; but do not blame those to whom God has not given the great torches and majestic blazing candelabra, but only penny candles, in this illumination of nature.

The religious instinct in man is also, to a great extent, organic. What most men call religion,—the tendency to adore, the joy of piety, the feeling which carries one to worship, the satisfaction in religious ceremonies and forms, in liturgies and sacred occasions,—this is a constitutional thing. Some races have more, some less. The ancient Egyptians had the most of any races ever yet known. They lived to worship. Their national life was in worship. Their political constitution was a hierarchy. It was a government of priests. So some persons now are made very prone to worship: others have little of this tendency. It is a deep and beautiful element in the soul; but it is no merit to have it, no sin to be without it.

Part of our human goodness comes from these natural sources; but another part comes from education, from outward influence. This also is of grace, not of works.

Look back on your life, and see what blessed influences have come to you to form your character, to ennoble your aims, to inspire you with a true spirit,—from the home of your childhood, from your father and mother and the dear friends of your youth, from the revered and holy men and women whose mature virtues rose around you like solid walls of marble to keep out evil influence. You heard in your childhood good and just sentiments. It was taken for granted, in all conversation, that men were to be true and pure, upright and firm; that life was a trust, not given for selfish ends, but to be used for good. It was not the direct moral teaching you heard at home which did you the most good, but the indirect, spontaneous, automatic teaching,—that which came from the character of others, not from their thoughts. We, my dear friends, have been born in a community saturated by the teachings of the New Testament. The conscience of society has been educated by the Sermon on the Mount. In every New England village, when the Sunday bells send their mellow invitations to praise and prayer over the sleeping hills and valleys, on each returning day of Jesus Christ, the little children are taken into his arms and pressed to his loving heart. The sun of Christianity shines on the evil and the good. Not a reckless boy, the torment of his home; not a hard, grasping, selfish, sharp-featured country trader or lawyer,—but has, in the depth of his soul, some sweet and holy influence which came to him as a divine gift when he was a little child; and there it is down in the depth of his heart to-day.

Who is there that has not loved, and has not been loved? What did we do to merit that tender love of parent and child, of grandfather and grandmother, of husband and wife, that generous, self-forgetting devotion of friend, of brother and sister? What did we ever do to be so loved? Who ever deserved half the love he has received? Of the good in our hearts, how large a part has flowed from this grace of God which made others come to us with their noble, frank, true-hearted affection! All love is of grace. It is never deserved. Nobody ever deserved to be loved; but being loved makes us more deserving than anything else can.

"Love is too young to know what conscience is;
But who knows not conscience is born of love?"

Then more of our goodness than we think comes from the divine presence of God in

nature. The calm succession of day and night, of spring and summer, teaches us the dignity of order and law. The serene beauty of the sky and the fields, the wide-spread joy coming from the clouds, the forest, the grassy meadows, the flowing streams, take us out of our own little projects and plans, and teach us that what God has made common to all men is the best thing he has given us. Nature, enlarging our conceptions, unites us with our fellow-men, and teaches us humanity. And who ever did anything to earn this? God gives all this lavish beauty and abundant glory to every creature who has eyes to see it and a heart to feel it.

So, too, the grace of God has given us Jesus Christ. We who have heard, learned, and been taught of him, did nothing ourselves to obtain that privilege.

Thus we see how the grace of God has been the source of nearly all the good there is in us. Some of it has come to us in our original organization, some has been given us through education, some through Christianity. And now the gospel says to us that all this is only the preparation for a deeper and fuller life of love which God means to give to all of us on the condition of faith. That is, trust him. Do not doubt his nearness, his influence, his good will. Believe that what he has begun he means to carry on and finish. Trust in your Father; and each day accept, as from him, the gift of life, the inflowing light of conscience and of reason, the inflowing love which draws out your heart to those around you, the inflowing aspiration which longs for some better and higher goodness. It is always ready to come into your soul. Only open your heart to receive this new life each day in faith. The faith in God and ourselves will make us do more, make us more faithful, conscientious, obedient. We shall work more when we do not work to gain a reward or to escape a punishment, but because God is our Father, and we know it, and so feel perfectly safe.—"*The Hour which Cometh*," *James Freeman Clarke.*

We have time enough, opportunity enough, faculty enough, for everything. One thing only we need; and that is faith in the nature God has given us, its capacities and possibilities.

THE STILL HOUR.

TO-DAY.

New words to speak, new thoughts to hear,
  New love to give and take:
Perchance new burdens I may bear
  To-day for love's sweet sake.

New hopes to open in the sun;
  New efforts worth the will;
Or tasks, with yesterday, begun,
  More bravely to fulfil.

Fresh seeds for all the time to be
  Are in my hand to sow,
Whereby for others and for me
  Undreamed of fruit may grow.

And if, when eventide shall fall
  In shade across my way,
It seems that naught my thoughts recall
  But life of every day,

Yet if each step in shine or shower
  Shall be with thee for guide,
Then blest be every happy hour
  That keeps me at thy side.

—*Chambers's Journal.*

If you wish to do good to your brother, you must have confidence in him. This is the first and most essential step toward helping him. Take for granted that men are mean and false, and you make them so. Take for granted that they wish to do right, and you lead them up the right way. They take courage from your confidence, and begin to believe in themselves.

From faith to faith! Confidence in man leads us to trust in God. He who has not faith in his brother whom he has seen, how can he have faith in God whom he has not seen? We say that God is good, and so we trust him. But what do we mean by goodness except the goodness we have seen here? Infinite goodness is to our conception human justice, human generosity, human pity, carried upward to their perfection. If we have no faith in man, how can we have faith in God? Every noble act of devotion to truth, every pure life unstained with evil, every word of pity, every instance of forgiving goodness, helps us to a better faith in that divine and eternal goodness which has no variableness or shadow of turning.

From faith to faith! In the same way our faith in prayer grows till it becomes like that of Jesus, unwavering and sure. We

often think, before experience has taught us better, that prayer is only contemplation, meditation, that the only answer to prayer is the reaction of our own thoughts,—that it is not communion, but self-communion. We say that God will not change his laws in answer to prayer; and, having said that, we think the question settled. Yes, he does not change his laws; but may it not be one of his laws that those who ask him sincerely and earnestly for inward peace, light, strength, pardon, comfort, shall receive it? Far down in the mysterious depths of the soul, below any distinct consciousness, is the region where we are in communion with God. We hear no sound: there is no tempest, no earthquake, no fire, but a voice so low and sweet and still that we only know the peace that comes, the strength that is given, the comfort of the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts, and we say, "I *was* weak: I *am* strong."—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

It is requested that each mother desiring "Gentle Measures in Training the Young" shall write her own request, and also state the number and ages of her children.

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the *first* request.

Educational.

Tarbell's "Lessons in Language"; Maxwell's "Advanced Lessons in English Grammar"; Maxwell's "Introductory Lessons in English Grammar"; Worcester's "New Pronouncing Spelling Book"; Harrington's "New Spelling Book"; Monroe's "Practical Speller"; Monroe's "First Reader"; Monroe's "Third Reader"; Anderson's "United States History."

Mathematics.

Prince's "Arithmetic by Grades"; Wentworth's "Grammar School Arithmetic"; Ray's "New Test Examples in Arithmetic."

Geography.

"The World at Home."

History.

"The Making of the American Nation," No. 3 of Gilman's History Readers; "The Beginner's American History," Montgomery.

French.

"Les Deux Petits Patriots," Bruno; "Capi et sa Troupe," Malot; "French Primer," Worman; two copies "First French Book,"

Worman; "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge," Worman; "Primer of French Composition," Blouët; "L'Abbé Constantin," Halévy; "Contes des Fées," Mme. Beaumont; "Histoire de la Mère Michel et de son Chat," Bédollierre.

Latin.

P. Ovidius Naso, "Gate to Cæsar."

German.

"Poetry for Repetition," Buchheim.

Juvenile.

"Animals and Birds"; "The Picture Fable Book"; "Rollo in London," Abbott; "The Kingdom of Coins," Bradley Gilman; "The Motherless Children," Mrs. Leslie; "Open Sesame," collection of classical poems for young people; "Cowslip, and Other Stories in Verse"; "Jewish History"; "Sweet William," Marguerite Bouvet; "Malleville," author of "Rollo"; "On the Seashore."

Fiction.

"Leslie Goldthwaite," Mrs. Whitney; "Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio," Coffin; "Miss Bayle's Romance," Fraser Rae; "Waverley"; "Short Stories."

Religious.

"Minister's Hand-book"; "Helps to Devout Living"; "Christianity and Modern Thought"; "American Religion," Weiss; "Every-day Life and Every-day Morals," Chaney; "South Place Discourses," Ellis; "On the Threshold," Munger; "Radical Discourses," Denton; "Radical Problems," Bartol.

Poetry.

"Pansies," A. D. T. W.; "A Nation's Birth, and Other Poems," Calvert.

The following books are offered by Miss E. M. Tayler, 353 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.: "Jo's Boys," "Little Men," L. M. Alcott; "Life, Letters, and Journals of Louisa M. Alcott"; "Story of Chaldea," Ragozin; "Masterpieces of American Literature"; "Natural Philosophy," Quackenbos; "School Algebra," Wentworth; "Ovid" (Latin), with notes and vocabulary.

History.

"United States to '56," Quackenbos; "England to '41," Bernard; "General History," Myers.

German.

"Wilhelm Tell," Schiller; "Dichtung und Wahrheit," Goethe.

French.

"French Composition," Grandgent; "Athalie," Racine.

Maynard's English Classics (with Notes).

"Essays of Elia," Lamb; Boswell's "Johnson"; "Milton," "Lays of Ancient Rome," Macaulay; "Hero as a Prophet," Carlyle; "Antigone of Sophocles"; "Sir Roger de Coverley," Addison; "Prologue to Canterbury Tales," Chaucer; "Essays," Bacon; "Comus," "Paradise Lost" (Book I.), Milton; "Conciliation," Burke; "Rape of the Lock," Pope; "Faerie Queene," Spenser.

The following books are offered by the Girls' Club of Laconia: Address Miss Florence M. Elsam, 141 Union Avenue, Laconia, New Hampshire. "Elements of Rhetoric and Composition," David J. Hall; "Practical Elements of Rhetoric," John F. Genung; "Astronomy," Sharpless and Philips; "History of United States," Marcius Willson; "Pictorial History of United States," Benson Lossing; "Ancient and Modern History," M. J. Kerney; "A Child's History of Canada," Henry H. Miles; Hutchinson's "Physiology and Hygiene"; Hitchcock's "Geology"; Steele's "New Chemistry"; Cooley's "New Chemistry"; Appleton's "First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Readers"; Franklin's "Primer"; Franklin's "Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Readers," also "Advanced Third Reader"; Olney's "Complete Algebra"; Greenleaf's "New Elementary Algebra"; Greenleaf's "Shorter Course in Geometry"; Bradbury's "Elementary Geometry"; Wentworth's "Arithmetical Problems"; Monteith's "Easy Lessons in Popular Science."

The following books are offered by the Women's Alliance, Second Church, Salem, Mass. Address Miss L. Adele Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

Religious.

Livermore's "Commentaries" (4 vols.); *Quarterly Journal A. U. A.*, 1860, 1864–69 (7 vols.); *Unitarian Quarterly Review*, 1857; "Religious Educator"; "New Testament," Noyes's translation; "New Testament,"

Sawyer's Translation; "Nature and Life," Robert Collyer, D.D.; "Hearth-stone," Rev. Samuel Osgood.

Miscellaneous.

"What Answer?" Anna Dickinson; "Country Life," "Summer Rest," "Wool Gathering," Gail Hamilton; "Silent Partner," Elizabeth Stuart Phelps; "Cecil Dreeme," Theodore Winthrop; *Child's Friend*, 1858; "Little Men," L. M. Alcott.

Miss Mamie L. Pedigo, The Hollow, Virginia, offers, and will pay postage, on the following books: "Kidnapped," "The Silence of Dean Maitland," "The Corsican Brothers," "Ships that pass in the Night."

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

Mrs. Dora Hawkins, Lime Rock, Stokes County, North Carolina, a young woman not able to buy it, will be glad of any suitable reading.

Mrs. U. F. Calloway, Linwood, Indian Territory, asks for two of Webster's spelling-books for the first grade.

Mrs. Kittie Snellings, Ryan, Indian Territory, asks for reading for herself and son (age not given), which she will be glad to pass on to others.

Mrs. Sallie M. Coverdale, Ogden, Clinton County, Ohio, would like any one of M. Holley's books,—"Samantha among the Brethren," "Samantha at Saratoga," or "Samantha at the World's Fair."

Mrs. Mary Lawrason, Fayetteville, North Carolina, would be glad to receive "Priscilla," *Art Interchange*, or any book or magazine that will help her with china painting or needlework.

Mrs. Louise H. Goodwin, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, is anxious for a book on "Heraldry."

Mrs. S. T. Lisk, Conner, Marion County, Florida, writes: "We do need good reading for our children, young and old people. There is nothing would do more good here during these long summer days than interesting, instructive reading. In my Sunday-school class to-day were seven bright boys, for whom I long to furnish just such entertainment for their leisure."

(Will not *The Cheerful Letter* readers remember Mrs. Lisk?)

Mrs. Henry Kreiger, Manzanola, Colorado, would be glad to receive *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, or the *Century Magazine* every month; also any German book or magazine would be very welcome.

Any books or papers, such as the *Youth's Companion*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Cosmopolitan*, or any reading matter suitable for a young lady, would be very much appreciated, as I live in the country, and am not able to buy books, and there is no library here. Miss Julia Berkshire, Goshen, Oregon.

Mrs. James A. Tyner, 2929 Clinton Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, asks for *McClure's Magazine* for April, 1895. She would also be *very* glad if some one could send her the *New England Magazine* or *McClure's Magazine* after reading. She passes on such reading to others.

Dear Cheerful Letter,—I received from London some little booklets, one of which was written by the lady who sent them to me. She did not give her address, so I cannot write to her, but will acknowledge them through our dear little paper. They give me a great deal of pleasure, and I thank her sincerely.

I also received from Boston two books that the children were so glad to have, but we cannot tell who sent them. One was a book of recitations, the other "Familiar Quotations." The latter the children use every week in their school. They are required one day to quote something from an eminent author; and, before we received this book, it was difficult to find quotations or "memory gems," as they call them, for so many. I also thank the lady who sends me the *Mayflower* after she reads it and all those who send me reading for distribution. I try to acknowledge all, but sometimes the address is not given. Mrs. W. C. Smith, Chase, Kansas.

I wish to thank all the kind friends who sent me books, pictures, etc., for the children at Christmas. It would have made your hearts glad, could you have seen how pleased they were to receive them. And now I come again in behalf of the children. Can any of you help me in getting school-books, as there are many who cannot attend school for the want of books? We have two schools for white children and one for colored. I will give the list of books used here: Stickney's "Spellers," Harper's "Readers," Milnes's "Arithmetics," Maury's "Geographies," Cooper's "United States Histories," Harris's "History of Georgia," Conklin's "Grammar," "Spencerian Method of Copy-books." We will be so thankful for any books sent us; and, I can assure you, you could not send them where they are more needed than here. Mrs. J. Porter, Parkerville, Worth County, Georgia.

MR. LAMMERKIN'S ENDEAVORS.

(*Concluded.*)

As soon as there was a good fire a-going, and the bread had been put in, he went out into the back kitchen to wring those few pieces out of the tub, and made such a splashing that, though I called—on account of wanting the baby's bottle—and knocked with an umbrella, he did not hear, but hung out the clothes. When he came back, he looked into the oven, and said:—

"Elinor, 'tis black."

"I was afraid so," said I. "You have— That is, bread has to be watched."

John looked at his list.

"I'll iron that little petticoat now," said he.

"Is the flatiron on?" I asked.

"No," said he. And on it went with a thump.

"How about the meat?" said I. "Don't let it catch on."

He took off the pot-cover.

"It has," said he. "'Tis dry as a chip inside here."

"I thought I smelled something," said I. "You have to— I mean it's a sign of rain when the water boils away fast."

"I'll sit down, and keep watch o' these matters," said he.

I inquired the time of day.

"Just going to strike eleven," said he.

"You've a good many things to do in an hour," said I.

"That's a fact," said he. "I'd better keep moving."

He went into the back buttery to skim the milk, and, when he came back, said the cat had saved him the trouble of skimming one pan.

"I suppose the buttery door has been left open ever since you got the baby's milk," said I. "You have to"—

"To look out about that cat?" said he.

"No," said I, "about the door. I have to stop and set a chair against it every time I come out."

This touched him in a tender spot; for, if I had asked him once to get that latch mended, I had twenty times.

Sick as I felt, I thought I should die a-laughing to see the manœuvres in that kitchen the last hour before dinner. I think about every dish and pan in the house were brought out, and set down, some in chairs, some on tables, and one or two on the floor, to make room for the ironing-cloth. John is a plucky fellow. He was determined to do everything that was on the list. He flew round like a top, run-

ning here and there, fetching and carrying, and asking questions. He spatted the butter, he peeled the potatoes, and doused them in, he rushed after the meal bucket,—for the mush,—he went like a dart to fetch the ironing cloth, taking mighty quick steps for a person that felt in no hurry, and mighty long ones,—two of 'em took him across the kitchen,—and on his tiptoes part of the time, because I lay back with a veil over my face and he thought I was asleep. But I wasn't: I was laughing. When the water boiled away again, I heard him mutter, "Oh! you have to look out about that." He filled the pot so full it boiled over. "Oh! you have to look out about that," he muttered again.

In ironing the baby's flannel petticoat, he scorched a place; and I saw by the motion of his lips that he was whispering, "Oh! you have to look out about that." He made the same motion when the spoon-handle slipped into the mush, and when the baby—baby was out there in his high-chair—grabbed the buttermilk basin, and when the fire almost went out again, and especially when some of the clothes-pins dropped off the line and let the clothes drag on the ground. The words were spoken out loud then, and had another word joined to them that sounded almost like a "swear word." I asked him when he was going to bake his pie. He asked me if I didn't think we could do very well without pie for one night; and I said, Oh, yes! if he could. So he picked up the rolling-pin out of the clothes-basket and the rolling-board from behind the door, and carried them away.

The children came home from school, and had to wait half an hour for their dinner. John let them eat as soon as it was ready, but said he believed he would quiet down a little before he took anything into his stomach or he should have dyspepsia.

That evening, after the children were in bed, and the house was still, John sat by the fire a long time, very quiet, as if engaged in meditation. At last he broke out with:—

"I could have done every identical thing on that list—if there had been time enough, and done them well—only for having to keep up such a continual lookout. I don't see how the—cook-stove—you manage to think forward and backward and all round, and carry on so many things at once. And you do a great many more things than I did,—make clothes and mend them, and wash and iron and bake and clean house, and see to the children, and tend baby night and day; and there seems to be no end, no let-up. There's something for every hour and every minute."

"I shouldn't mind that so much," said I, "if there were only hours and minutes enough for the work. But sometimes, when I wake up in the morning and think of what must be done that day, and of the yesterday's work left undone, and of to-morrow's which is sure to come, I own I do now and then feel discouraged, particularly when baby has had a worrisome night. I soon brighten up, though, and take lots of comfort doing things for you and the children. But sometimes I think that, even for her family's sake, a woman ought to have time to eat."

"Why, Elinor," said he, "what do you mean? You always come to the table regular."

"Yes," said I; "but, if a woman hurries through the forenoon and feels tired and worried and tremulous-like, she doesn't feel like eating, and besides her food is apt to disagree with her, especially if she has to go on hurrying right after eating; and, if this sort of thing is kept up a good while, why, of course she gets all run down, and can't do for her family as she otherwise would."

Upon this John went into another fit of meditation. Once during the time he muttered to himself, without stirring, "No noonings, no evenings, no rainy days." Afterward he turned his chair, rested his chin on the back, and muttered the same thing, "No noonings, no evenings, no rainy days."

Mrs. A. M. Diaz.

We live by days. They are the leaves folded back each night in the great volume that we write. They are our autobiography. Each day takes us not newly, but as a tale continued. It finds us what yesterday left us. . . . And, as we go on, every day is telling to every other day truths about us, showing the kind of being that is handed on to it, making of us something better or something worse, as we decide.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*All articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

WHICH?

Which shall it be! Which shall it be?
I looked at John. John looked at me
(Dear, patient John! who loves me yet
As well as though my locks were jet);
And, when I found that I must speak,
My voice seemed strangely low and weak:
"Tell me again what Robert said?"
And then I, list'ning, bent my head.
"This is his letter:—

"'I will give
A house and land while you shall live
If in return, from out your seven,
One child to me for aye is given.'"
I looked at John's old garments worn,
I thought of all that John had borne
Of poverty and work and care,
Which I, though willing, could not share.
I thought of seven mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this.

"Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie
Asleep." So, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band.
First to the cradle lightly stepped
Where Lilian, the baby, slept,
A glory 'gainst the pillow white.
Softly the father stopped to lay
His rough hand down in loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily he said, "Not her,—not her!"

We stooped beside the trundle-bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Athwart the boyish faces there
In sleep so pitiful and fair.
I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.

Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace.
"No, not for a thousand crowns, not him,"
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.

Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one,—
Could he be spared? Nay, He who gave,
Bid us befriend him to the grave.
Only a mother's heart could be
Patient enough for such as he.
"And so," said John, "I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer."

Then stole we softly up above,
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in wilful way,
And shook his head. "Nay, love, not thee,"
While my heart beat audibly.

Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad,—
So like his father. "No, John, no:
I cannot, will not let him go."

And so we wrote, in courteous way,
We could not drive one child away;
And afterward toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we dreamed,—
Happy, in truth, that not one face
We missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven.

—*Selected.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material, for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

CHARADE.

We do my *last* and *first*
When the door doth stand ajar;
When my *second* is fairly cast,
We know just where we are.
In flower and in fabric,
My *whole* is oft admired;
But when applied to feelings,
'Tis not to be desired.

E. P. P.

NUTS TO CRACK.

1.

A blind beggar had a brother, that brother died. The man who died had no brother. What relation were they to each other?

2.

A boy driving some ducks was asked how many he had. He replied, "When in line there are two ducks ahead of a duck, two ducks behind a duck, and one duck in the middle." How many ducks had he?

3.

A man has one hundred dollars and buys one hundred animals. He pays ten dollars each for cows, three dollars for hogs, and fifty cents for sheep. How many of each did he buy?

4.

What is the difference between a woodpecker and a peck measure?

THE GAME OF COMPARISONS.

One person thinks of a word to which can be added an *er*, either by sound or literally so. These words he describes, and the rest of the company try to guess them. Example, bow or beau; bore, boa, or boar; and even a superlative can be made of the word, *boast*. A word with a double meaning, like this, makes more fun. It is confusing and harder to guess. You can say: My positive is many-colored and is seen rising to a great height. It is worn on a dress, and used in old-time warfare. My comparative is also an article of wearing apparel, an animal, and a very tiresome person. My superlative is what people who think themselve very smart often do. Of course, the more these definitions are amplified, the better.

SEA-CRAFT.

1. Two-thirds of a bridge.
2. Part of a tree.
3. Not an old letter.
4. A scold.
5. A goblet for beer.
6. A cooking utensil.
7. A dealer in coal.
8. An animal.
9. Used in warfare.
10. Found by the seaside.
11. A sleigh.
12. An officer in a boy's school.
13. To pull.
14. Delicate.
15. Is the answer which would be given if President McKinley should ask a captain, "Who mans your boat?"

Answers to puzzles in May number.

CHARADES.

1. Flotilla. 2. Nonsense.

CONUNDRUMS.

1.

The fall of Turkey, the overthrow of Greece, the demolishing of China, the mortification of Africa.

2.

For divers reasons, for sundry reasons, to liquidate his little bill, to have a run on the bank.

POETICAL PI.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

PUZZLE.

Ovid.

LIFE AN EDUCATION.

It has seemed to me that *education* is a much better word than "probation" to express the divine purpose concerning man in this present world. We are God's children here, and are being taught, trained, developed, by what we are passing through. He has no occasion to put us to the test to see what we are worth: he knows that already, we may suppose. But the divine idea appears to be to bring out the good things that are in us; and so the world is made a place of discipline and development. Of course, in this process a great deal is brought out that is not good, requiring correction through farther discipline; but the general outcome of human activities and experiences is a growth of faculty, a deepening sense of moral obligation, finer spiritual insight, an increasing love of goodness and of truth. Men are occasionally made worse; but, on the whole, they are made better by having to do with each other. We may look upon the world, then, as a school in which mankind receive a certain preparation for what succeeds. In every school there are some who cannot be taught much, some who will learn only iniquity. Still, the processes of instruction go on; and those who will profit by them. In the great school of God there are courses of discipline and culture in infinite variety. Every person is led through experiences more or less peculiar to himself; but, whatever the lot or the task, the teachable soul draws from it some useful lesson, and comes out of it with some new nobility. Sorrow as well as joy, sickness as well as health, adversity as well as prosperity, yield their returns, when considered as means of discipline and development. Even mistakes and repented sins serve their purpose in this school; and man

may make stepping-stones to heaven of faults surmounted, of hardships and afflictions patiently borne, of chastenings trustfully accepted as from a Father's hand.

Thus the truth is borne to us from all sides that what man gets out of life is education. We are here to derive from our experiences the best development of our own powers,—to walk uprightly that we may acquire uprightness, to do good that we may be good, to bear burdens that we may gain strength, to feel sorrow that we may obtain the power of sympathy, and that softer, deeper tone of the spirit without which no one is made perfect.—*Rev. Newton M. Mann.*

MRS. EMMA M. BACKUS has returned to SALUDA, POLK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

THE SIN OF OMISSION.

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts to-night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say,
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
The gentle and winsome tone
That you had no time nor thought for,
With troubles enough of your own.

These little acts of kindness,
So easily out of mind,
These chances to be angels
Which even mortals find,
They come in night and silence,
Each chill, reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late.
And it's not the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bitter heartache
At the setting of the sun.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

THE RUBY-THROATED HUMMING-BIRD.

Did you ever see a humming-bird sitting on a bare branch of a towering tree? Until you have, you will scarcely appreciate what a wee mite of a bird it is. Indeed, I find it hard to think of it as a bird at all. It seems more like a fairy, "a glittering fragment of a rainbow," as Audubon calls it, or, as some one else has said,

"Like a gem or a blossom on pinions,"—

something too dainty and airy to have even three inches of actual length. It seems like the winged spirit of color, as it comes humming through the air to hover over the flowers on the piazza, its body like green beryl and its throat glancing fire. Like Puck, it might boast that it could "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes"; for, while we are wondering at its friendliness, it darts off and is gone like the flash of a diamond. One who has had experience with them says:—

"In confinement they do not appear to pine for freedom, as other birds do, but seem contented and at home from the first. I kept a pair caged a whole summer, feeding them with water sweetened with honey or sugar. When I put a cup of their food in the cage, they would alight on my fingers, and, with their long, flexible tongue, suck off the honey I had accidentally spilled. In disposition they are too pugnacious to live as harmoniously as one would expect or desire, sometimes pursuing one another round the cage with great ferocity, and such inconceivable rapidity that their tiny forms seemed resolved into absolute *sound*. I frequently permitted them to fly about the room for exercise, but they never returned voluntarily to their cage. When caught, they did not resist or struggle, but saw the door of their prison-house closed upon them without a complaint.

"Some years a few are unaccountably tardy about migrating. At other times they make the mistake of coming too early in the spring. Undoubtedly, most of them migrate in August; but with them, as in every other community, there are always some laggards as well as bold pioneers. I once found one in my house on a very cold morning in the fall. He was probably sleeping on some house-plants that had been brought

in from the frost the previous night, and was too benumbed with cold to know it. I caught and fed him, as it would have been barbarous to turn him out in the cold. He soon became a great pet, and was tame as a kitten.

"One day two gentlemen entered the room where his cage was hanging, both wearing tall hats. He fell immediately to the bottom of the cage, with wings outspread, eyes closed, body rigid, and with every appearance of death. We took him in our hands and warmed him by the fire. He still remained motionless. We decided that those *hats* had frightened him to death. With sad heart I laid him aside, intending to embalm him at my leisure.

"A few minutes later my friends left the house. Directly after the door closed I heard a humming and buzzing in the room. Looking up, there was my bird circling around the room in the most hilarious manner. Who can tell whether his apparent death was not counterfeited? If it was not feigned, why did he revive the moment the door was closed and I was alone?

"If you capture one out of doors and hold him in your hand, he will practise the same ruse, stretching himself out stiff and motionless. Thrown off your guard, you stoop to examine your prize, when, lo! your hand is empty and your bird nearly out of sight before you have time to recover from the astonishment.

"One sunny morning I observed an unusual number of humming-birds and bees working among the blossoms in the garden. Presently there was a commotion. The humming-birds had united to drive the bees away, darting at them furiously, uttering at the same time their spiteful, piping cries. The bees, intent on seeking their breakfast, at first gave up good-naturedly and flew to some other flower, only to be driven from that a moment later. At length forbearance ceased to be a virtue, and the temper of the apathetic bee was aroused. A fierce battle ensued. They pursued one another around and around that flower bed, over and under and through the flowers, sometimes the birds and then the bees having the vantage. Their rage knew no bounds, and they fought till sheer exhaustion compelled them to desist."— *From "Birds through an Opera Glass," by Florence A. Merriam.*

The weakest living creature, by consecrating his powers on a single object, can accomplish something.—*Carlyle.*

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

During Miss Clarke's absence in Europe, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., will act as editor.

After May 19 the personal address of our treasurer will be Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass. But subscriptions may be addressed to her or left for her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., *at any season.*

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols.